

Abstract

Methods for providing online health monitoring and accumulating data from patients worldwide, and accompanying apparatus for using the same, are disclosed. Such monitoring is particularly useful for both diagnosing and prescribing preventive medical treatment, and is particularly suited for the field of cardiovascular health care. Preferred methods and devices include using a sensitive acoustic device, such as an electret, to analyze a patient's cardiovascular functions from a location such as a public computer kiosk, a doctor's office or a patient's home computer. The data may be downloaded from the acoustic device to a central database located, for example, on the Internet. The data may be retrieved by the patient, or upon instructions from the patient, may be transferred to or accessed by doctors for purposes of diagnosis, monitoring and treatment. The data may, in addition, include demographic and like data for each patient and preferably be stored while maintaining the anonymity of each patient. Such data may then be accessible to researchers who will have medical statistics on a wide variety of patients from various age groups, ethnic backgrounds, medical histories and the like.